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Outsiders rule Salvador left, Haig testifies

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WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig said yesterday the Reagan Administration has "overwhelming and irrefutable" evidence that leftist guerrilla operations in El Salvador are not only supplied but also commanded and controlled by forces outside the Central American nation.

"The operations of the guerrilla forces inside El Salvador are controlled by external command and control," Haig told the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Haig would not say what countries were involved, but said House and Senate intelligence committees have been briefed on the evidence in the past week.

Haig's testimony, which went further than any previous Administration claims regarding the level of foreign intervention in El Salvador, was disputed by Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), a member of the Foreign Affairs and Intelligence committees who said he knew of no such evidence.

The Secretary's appearance yesterday came as the House voted overwhelmingly to urge President Ronald Reagan "to press for unconditional discussions" among the major political factions in El Salvador to ensure a "safe and stable environment for free and open democratic elections."

The resolution had been initially proposed by critics of the Administration's policy, but, while the State Department was not enthusiastic about the proposal, the White House and Republican leadership did not lobby against the measure. The final 396-3 roll call was more a reflection of the resolution's vague language than any unanimity among the members. The Foreign Affairs Committee leadership introduced the resolution under a parliamentary procedure which limited debate to 40 minutes and allowed no amendments.

"This resolution is easy to support because the President is already doing what this resolution asks him to do," said Rep. William Broomfield of Michigan, the ranking Republican on the committee.

Liberal Democrats, however, argued that the Administration has supported the Salvadoran government's insistence that the leftists put down their arms before any negotiations are held regarding elections. This condition has contributed to a stalemate where the guerrillas are refusing to participate in voting scheduled for March 28.

Rep. Gerry Studds, one of the original cosponsors, said the resolution "flies in the face" of the Administration's position. In his testimony, Haig acknowledged a "nuance of difference" between the resolution and the President's policy. Studds later told a reporter, "The nuance he (Haig) doesn't like is 'unconditional.'"

Republicans not wanting to break with the Administration made a distinction between "unconditional discussions" and "unconditional negotiations," and, since the resolution gives implied support of the elections scheduled this month, it was said to support the President's position.

"I support this resolution and I'm not flying in the face of the Administration by doing so and I'd like that understood," said Rep. Millicent Fenwick (R-N.J.) in answer to Studds. She found support from Democratic Majority Leader Jim Wright of Texas.

"I do not know how much good this resolution will do, but I support it because it puts us on the side of those who would settle their differences by ballots and not by bullets," said Wright. "To that end I support this resolution and the elections of March 28 as the only legitimate and honorable way in which to solve the difficulties in El Salvador."

As a member of the Democratic leadership, Wright has been conspicuous in his outspoken support of the President's policy in El Salvador, but there has been growing resistance among liberal members of his party and some Republicans to the Administration's position particularly in regard to military aid. These feelings were reflected in yesterday's debate and questioning, but it is unlikely that any more forceful resolution will come up for a vote before the elections this month.